

Heavy with rain, the forest was absolutely motionless. Everything had withered and died, but right down on the ground the late autumn's secret garden was growing with great vigor straight out of the moldering earth, a strange vegetation of shiny puffed-up plants that had nothing at all to do with summer. Late blueberry sprigs were yellowish-green and the cranberries as dark as blood. Hidden lichens and mosses began to grow, and they grew like a big soft carpet until they took over the whole forest. Strong new colors were everywhere, and red rowanberries were shining all over the place. But the bracken had turned black.